



MONTHLY REPORT APRIL 2020

Commercial and Recreational Fisheries

- With the continued closure of restaurants in the state and around the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic, shellfish harvesting has continued to be limited. It was clear from our daily patrol logs that markets wanted quahogs and small orders of blood clams, but the commercial fishery for oysters is very slow, probably because they are destined for a strictly raw bar market, while clams get cooked.
- The recreational fishery, however, was about three times as busy in April of 2020 as compared to April of 2019. We sold fewer recreational permits to date this year, but those permits are getting used more frequently. On nice weather days, there are dozens of recreational shellfishermen on Indian Neck and in Chipman's Cove. It is wonderful to have residents and visitors be able to social distance in an outdoor activity and harvest an important source of protein for their tables.
- We assisted many people in obtaining their recreational permits with Town Hall closed.
- Dragger boats were active through the middle of the month, participating in the inner channel quahog relay, where we paid them for quahogs to stock our recreational areas. The Shellfish Department began this program to make sure that shellfish were harvested from the channel before it gets dredged this October and to offer a way for draggers to make some money when markets were not buying.
- The Selectboard petitioned the state to extend the bay scallop season in Wellfleet Harbor through April 30. The Division of Marine Fisheries granted the extension due to resource abundance and to help shellfishermen diversify their revenue stream during economic downturn because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Our conservative estimate of commercial catches is more than 45 bushels of oysters, 400 bushels of quahogs, 50 bushels of blood clams and 16 bushels of bay scallops.
- We estimate that more than 15 bushels of quahogs and more than 20 bushels of oysters were harvested in the recreational fishery.
- We continued holding orientations for first-time commercial permit holders.
- Chipman's Cove and Duck Creek closed 30 minutes after sunset on April 30, 2020.

Enforcement

- One verbal warning was given to a commercial shellfisherman for not having tags.
- There were a few verbal warnings given to people fishing the Indian Neck recreational only area without permits.

State and Town Relations

- The department worked closely with state and town agencies and local nonprofits to develop programs to help shellfishermen through the COVID-19 crisis.
- The town received its MEPA certification allowing it to continue cultching the harbor, which is placing shellfish shells on the bottom to create habitat on which juvenile oysters will settle and grow. Shellfish Constable Nancy Civetta and Assistant Constable Johnny Mankevetch followed up with MEPA representative about implementation of a spat monitoring study and worked with Dr. Barbara Brennessel and our AmeriCorps member to devise its outline and parameters.

- Civetta worked with the Conservation Department to submit a proposal to AmeriCorps for an Individual Placement member to serve with our departments in 2020-2021.
- Civetta worked with Transfer Station Manager Mike Cicale on a grant for the Town to be able to continue to offer a free marine debris trash program for local shellfishermen.
- Marine debris dumpsters were set up in front of our offices during the negative low tides so that grant holders could dispose of their clam nets and other aquaculture gear.
- Civetta worked with the dredging task force to provide shellfishing information for a dredging program grant as well as 25 letters of support from the shellfishing community. She also provided a letter for our dredging application detailing the importance of dredging the mooring basin in Chipman's Cove, which is not and has not been a productive shellfish resource area.
- Civetta attended two Shellfish Advisory Board meetings, a few Emergency Management Team meetings and a Department Head meeting.
- Civetta attended two Selectboard meetings at which the board petitioned DMF for a bay scallop extension, approved two grant renewals, approved use of the department's Revolving Fund for the channel quahog relay and other relays that may come up. It also declined to give a public hearing to a grant holder and voted to give back all overwintering fees that were collected in 2020.
- We prepared grants #861 and 861-A for a lottery.
- Civetta helped Shellfish Advisory Board interview potential interns for a plastics project it is organizing to explore how to reduce the use of single use plastics in shellfish farming as well as alternatives to plastics.
- Deputy Constable Chris Manulla took the state biologist out for water quality sampling.
- Civetta met with an environmental contractor for a homeowner on Lieutenant's Island about an access route for shellfishermen on their property and determined that a beach nourishment project on Pine Point Rd. will not impact Duck Creek shellfish beds.

Propagation

- The department has relayed over 50,000 of our 2019 seed oysters to Indian Neck and throughout harbor. Most of this product was overwintered hatchery seed.
- Nearly 70 bushels of mixed sized quahogs were relayed between April 1 and 15 out of the inner harbor channel. In total, 141 bushels were relayed: 71 to the Indian Neck recreational area and 70 to Chipman's Cove. We paid fishermen a total of \$4,305.00.
- A shellfish farmer donated approximately 14,000 adult oysters and a dragger who lost his oyster market donated four bushels to the Shellfish Department. These were distributed to the Indian Neck recreational area to the delight of "rec" permit holders.
- The cultch barge went in the water on April 14.

Education and Public Relations

- We held an AmeriCorps project day to re-organize our shellfishing equipment at the pit, and they also assisted the department by tagging and making oyster grow bags and doing grant work such as sweeping clam nets and digging up quahogs.
- We distributed four commercial and two recreational Town Shellfishing Criers, as well as weekly welcome letters with important news to new recreational permitholders.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Civetta, Shellfish Constable